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CIA Truth Vs. Fiction

Critics of the United States Central Intelligence Agency would have us believe that the CIA is a cloak-and-dagger outfit operating virtually on its own, even making foreign policy.

This fiction enables CIA critics to arrive at the conclusion that the CIA must be curbed, that Senator J. W. Fulbright and his fellow doves must be given custody of the CIA "bully boys," and virtue thus returned to our foreign policy.

As a matter of fact, the real CIA bears no resemblance to the Fulbrightian version of the CIA. Its covert activities abroad are greatly overplayed, comprising only a minute fraction of its work which is, by and large, mostly routine compilation and research.

Adm. William F. Raborn, who preceded the new CIA Director Richard Helms, makes it clear in an interview in U. S. News & World Report that the CIA doesn't make foreign policy and always functions with the knowledge of the President, the State Department, the Defense Department and other policy-making agencies.

It also answers to appropriate committees in Congress as to its methods and operations. Its day-to-day operations are under the direct supervision of the National Security Council.

The CIA has five assigned functions: Advising the President and the National Security Council on intelligence matters relating to national security; coordinating all foreign intelligence activities of our government, producing and disseminating finished national intelligence within the government, and performing such other services as the National Security Council may direct.

Senator Fulbright in attempting to gain partial supervision of the CIA for his Foreign Relations Committee (fortunately rejected by an overwhelming Senate vote) indicated he wanted to probe its activities. We have not seen or heard information that would justify parading the inner workings of the CIA before the world.

As Raborn pointed out, when the enemy learns that our government has obtained certain information, it immediately goes after the source, which often is a CIA agent. Leaking of information could thus endanger the lives of CIA agents in hazardous overseas posts.

Instead of constantly knocking the CIA, the Senate doves should be glad they have such dedicated, courageous people serving in our first line of defense.